U.S. Indifferent as Saigon Votes Down Land Reform, P. 3

Our Favorite Republican Lets LBJ Have It

" 'The time has come to stop the rhetoric about a 'rebirth of American cities' unless we are willing as a nation to treat that goal as our highest domestic priority. . . . Something is wrong . . . when we reduce our commitment to our cities by well over a billion dollars at the same time we leave our space program virtually intact.' He [Mayor Lindsay] also reiterated his view that the escalation of the war in Vietnam was not the best road to peace."

—*"Lindsay Accuses Johnson of 'Shortchanging Cities'" in the* New York Times *Dec. 3.*

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Will the Cold Warriors Turn Tepid in the Rhodesian Crisis?

Rhodesia, by any standard, ranks just about at the worst end of the political spectrum, with South Africa its only rival. Nowhere else is there so complete, ruthless and wilfully blind a domination of a racial majority by a racial minority, monopolizing the best land and living off the majority's cheap labor. This is true to some degree in every country where white and colored peoples live together; the whiter tend to be on top, the darker on the bottom, even in such supposed models of racial equality as Brazil. Since the colored peoples are in the majority on this planet, and the technology of mass murder is spreading, this cannot go on forever. The way to avoid the rise of a repressive Black Power is to relinquish an oppressive White Power. Rhodesia puts the question starkly.

A Little Force Now

If we were wise, the United Nations would not depend on economic sanctions in the Rhodesian crisis, for these are bound to be ineffective, and to create more resentment and disillusion in Africa, where faith in law as a means of social change has already been irreparably hurt by the World Court's ignominious legalism in the case of South West Africa. With U.S. support the United Nations would muster an army and march it into Rhodesia. A relatively little force now could prevent major suffering later. The Africans see us mobilize a multi-million dollar juggernaut in Vietnam in a test of will and prestige with our imperial rivals, Russia and China. We can hardly expect them to believe we are helpless to deal with Rhodesia's 11,000-man army, 8,000 of them blacks, with a handful of planes and no access to the sea. Our propaganda insists that we are only in South Vietnam to assure its people freedom of choice. That propaganda will backfire in Rhodesia, where only the feeblest steps are envisaged to make 220,000 whites give not freedom of choice but *some hope* of future freedom to 4,000,000 blacks. The arithmetic is deadly.

The terms Harold Wilson offered Ian Smith gave the white Rhodesians everything they could ask in the way of gradualism. Not "all deliberate speed," as in our Supreme Court school decision, but every possibility of procrastination was embodied in the British government's terms except one—the power to pull a bluff, to do nothing about putting multi-racialism into action, and then to secede again with impunity. Only British control of the Rhodesian army and police could prevent it, and on that Britain—to its honor—refused to compromise. This was again one of England's "finest hours"—those who remember England's response to the attack on Poland after all the shabby efforts to appease Hitler know how she tends to flunk every test but the last.

Money For War But Not on Poverty

"A leader of Washington's war on poverty said this morning he is convinced the program has been 'torpedoed' and advised his staff members to seek new jobs . . . said Robert T. Adams, executive director of Friendship House, 'Congress will not appropriate more money for this program. . . . Shame on us—shame on a nation that sells its poor down the river'."

—Washington Evening Star, *Dec. 2.*

But this is ultimately our test, not Britain's. A showdown requires American support of the shaky pound sterling, and American readiness to back action so overwhelming as to frighten South Africa and Portugal. Neither has yet recognized the Rhodesian regime. Both are waiting to see which way the wind blows. They will abandon the Rhodesians rather than be drawn into a conflict with the rest of the world if the U.S. is firm. And the U.S. here means the great Rockefeller family with its Chase Manhattan bank and its vast investments in South Africa. Nelson Rockefeller was ready to send U.S. troops into the Congo some years ago and take to one of his many bomb shelters.* But the chances are these cold warriors will turn tepid in the Rhodesian crisis. One of the great conflicts of human history has begun.

*** "Mr. Rockefeller, an enthusiastic believer in fallout shelters, also had shelters built at his homes in Pocantico Hills, Washington, the executive mansion here, and his apartment house at 810 Fifth Avenue in New York City"—Albany dispatch in New York Times Dec. 3 reporting that the Governor's inaugural ball had been cancelled "because a fallout shelter is being built under the dance floor." One wonders what the Governor plans to do when he emerges after the next World War—operate an ESSO filling station?**

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The Socialists: They Went Out Heroes 30 Years Ago and Come Back Trimmers

Germany's New "Great Coalition" A Case of Bi-Partisan Bankruptcy

Germany's new *"Grosse Koalition"* is great in size not conception. It is long on votes and short on policies. When you add a plus and an equal minus, you get nothing at all. The Coalition joins together a Christian Democratic Union which is not Christian and a Social Democratic party which is no longer socialist. The new Chancellor Kiesinger was a Nazi who stayed in the party until the end despite what he now claims were early misgivings; in this he is a typical German figure. The new Vice Chancellor Brandt was an anti-Nazi who fled rather than knuckle under, and it is equally characteristic that this resistance—instead of bringing him honor—was long held against him. The strongest figure in the new government is Strauss, a militant nationalist, who wants a way to give Germany nuclear military power. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, want the Reich to renounce nuclear weapons. It is only because both parties have lost their vitality that a marriage between them is possible.

A Vacuum, Not A Crisis

Even so the coalition is not popular with the rank-and-file of either party. It robs both party programs of credibility. How can either be taken seriously if they can so easily get together? To join forces in a crisis would be admirable. To do so in a vacuum is laughable. On foreign policy the Social Democrats were closer to the Free Democrats, and the latter offered the Socialists the "unconditional support" of all 49 Free Democratic deputies (*London Sunday Telegraph,* Nov. 27) just two hours before Kiesinger and Brandt made their agreement. In a coalition with the Free Democrats, Brandt would have been Chancellor, the Socialists the major party and a clear line in foreign policy attainable. The Socialists were afraid—of the narrow 6-vote margin this would have given them—and probably also of taking the leadership. This would have produced a meaningful program on which to face new elections if necessary. But it would also have meant going against Washinton's wishes, and the German Socialists aspire to circle loyally in our orbit.

All the best elements in the Social Democratic party were against the big coalition. *Le Monde's* Bonn correspondent reported (Dec. 3) that when Kiesinger took the oath of office, the Christian Democrats were virtually the only ones to applaud. On the 23rd of March, 1933, after Hitler had gained a majority by outlawing the Communists, the Socialists were the only ones to vote against him. Their leaders paid with death and exile. Thirty years later the Social Democrats come back into government under one who was then a Nazi, and as junior partner with a party which is the lineal descendant of those Catholic Centrists who voted that day to make Hitler dictator. Willy Brandt's own son, Peter, joined 1500 demonstrators, mostly students, in Berlin who marched with banners reading "Black and red—democracy dead" (black for the Catholic clericals, red for the Socialists) while the novelist Gunther Grass, Brandt's friend, also protested.

France-Soir's Bonn correspondent reported (Nov. 29) that it took an all-night debate to get 60% of the Socialist deputies to accept the coalition agreement with Kiesinger. The opposition thought the party ought not to associate itself with the CDU just when it had proven bankrupt in economic as well as foreign policy, that it ought not to ally itself with a nationalist like Strauss and that the millions who voted Socialist in the last election did not do so to place an ex-Nazi at the head of the government. Seven of the 11 Social Democratic State organizations disapproved, and in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, the Social Democrats formed a "little coalition" with the Free Democrats. The leader of the Young Socialists even went so far as to propose the organization of an opposition group within the Social Democratic party. The fear was expressed that the Big Coalition would create disillusion with democracy by producing a huge bureaucratic state, with no real policy, leaving the opposition to the Reich's extreme right-wingers, the so-called National Democrats. Only the State Department seems to regard the new government with satisfaction.

Ky's Glorious Free Press Dept.

"A tame Communist committed to ownership of private property was displayed before the press by the Vietnamese government this afternoon and billed as one of the highest ranking Reds ever to desert the enemy camp. He is Le Trung Chuyen, a handsome, well-dressed, neatly groomed Lt. Colonel. . . . Chuyen's views seemed in so many ways to parallel those of Premier Ky and the Military Directorate. . . . There were smiles from the Vietnamese press at part of his reply as to why he had defected. 'I think that we should be free,' he said. 'I read the newspapers from the south because you can talk about what you want, report about what you want.' The Vietnamese newsmen were smiling because their press is heavily censored, and obviously so because each day there are large white patches on the front pages and editorial pages where offending items have literally been chiselled out."

—*Ward Just from Saigon in* Wash. Post, *Nov. 29.*

We May Kill A Lot More People But We'll Make the Pimps and Whores Happy

"Saigon, Dec. 2—U.S. combat troops will start moving into the Mekong Delta south of Saigon 'by the end of the year' Premier Nguyen Cao Ky said today. . . . Premier Ky belittled reservations expressed by South Vietnamese politicians and some American diplomats. The reservations centered on possible anti-American reactions by the people in the densely populated delta to heavy civilian casualties that use of U.S. firepower is expected to entail."

—New York Times, *Dec. 3.*

"Cantho, South Vietnam, Dec. 2—Confident that large numbers of U.S. troops are coming here soon, South Vietnamese businessmen and women are turning their attention to this central Mekong Delta city.

"In the last three months, construction has doubled. Real estate prices have doubled, tripled and in some cases increased tenfold, sources say. Every day bar girls and prostitutes step off rickety buses from Saigon, 80 miles to the north, scanning through heavily made up eyes their new base of operations."

—*Same paper, same day.*

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The Mystery of Tran Van Tran's Assassination: He Was for Peace Talks

Third World Grumbling Over U Thant's Surrender to Big Power Pressure

EXTRA: The news at press time of Tran Van Van's assassination in Saigon is puzzling. The UPI ticker reported, "Many of Van's colleagues in the Assembly refused to believe the police version" that he had been killed by Viet Cong agents. Reuters said the Assembly would establish an investigating committee of its own. Tran Van Van was Ky's principal rival for the Presidency. Though a wealthy landowner, a right winger and an opponent of land reform, the astute and urbane Tran Van Van was also an opponent of military rule as he had been of the Diem dictatorship, and advocated a negotiated peace. He was a leader of the Mekong Delta southerners and a critic of Ky's military junta as Northern dominated.

Behind the unanimity with which the Security Council and the General Assembly (with one abstention, probably Albania) greeted U Thant's decision to accept another full term as Secretary General was considerable private disagreement among the non-aligned nations. Though it may seem fantastic to Americans conditioned by the cold war, the fear which obsesses the non-aligned is U.S.-Soviet domination of the world.*

The Bombings Punctuate Their Fears

The continued bombing of North Vietnam, and the lack of Soviet counter-action, they see as a threatening shadow across their own future. They ask whether Vietnam, like Hungary before it, are samples of what the small powers are to expect if they challenge the two big ones. They regard U Thant's statement last September that he would not run again as a salutary protest, and some believe he should have held out for an end to the bombings as the price of staying on. They note that he said his change of mind under pressure from the great powers "is not based on any new element which has developed in recent weeks or any fond hope for the foreseeable future." This clearly means no promises were made him. This background makes it easier to understand the Secretary General's revelation at a diplomatic luncheon given him by the Egyptians Dec. 6 that even some of his "very close colleagues and well-meaning friends" had doubts about the propriety of his changing his mind.

Our own faith in U Thant as a man of the purest devotion gives us faith in his decision. The plea that the organization might be irreparably damaged by a fight over the finding of a successor must have weighed heavily with him, as well as the enhanced authority offered him for his personal initiatives as Secretary General. It was no mean achievement in the den of wolves which is world power politics that this obscure civil servant from one of the world's smallest countries should have won so pivotal a position in this precarious and limited attempt at a world government. He has proven himself worthy of his lonely and frustrating post. When he told the General Assembly, "I shall seize every occasion to recall that this war must be ended," these—from him—were not empty words.

*** It is indicative that Jeune Afrique, the Tunisian publication which is "the third world's" best weekly, runs a comic strip "Seraphina Contre Octagone" which relates the adventures of a secret agent fighting the "Octogon." The Octogon, modelled on the Pentagon, is the HQ of the SAR—the Soviet-American Republic!**

The Peasant, Not the Guerrilla, Gets Hit

"The Pentagon, aware the Viet Cong fears sudden bombing attacks most, has almost doubled the force of B-52s flying missions to Vietnam . . . they get no warning from the high-flying B-52s and, unless they are near reinforced underground tunnels, they have no way to evade the 500-pound and 750-pound bombs."

—*AP* in Christian Science Monitor *Dec. 3.*

"Most of the large Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units which operate in South Vietnam are warned of the imminence of a B-52 raid about two hours before they take place."

—Le Monde, *p. 24, Nov. 30, quoting U.S. officers in the high plateau regions who say Soviet trawlers off Guam flash a warning when the B-52s set off. It takes the B-52 four hours to reach Vietnam while the warning can be spread in two hours. A U.S. Colonel Kingston is quoted by the* Agence France Presse *as saying this is why they never find corpses on the ground after a B-52 raid but only in tunnels or shelters where there has been a direct hit.*

Land Reform Rejected by South Vietnam's Landlord Dominated Constituent Assembly

Land reform was supposed to have been given top priority at the Honolulu and Manila conferences. It has just been overwhelmingly rejected by South Vietnam's new Constituent Assembly, but with little attention from the U.S. In the Christian Science Monitor (Dec. 1) Dr. Phan Quang Dan, a Harvard educated physician, was quoted as telling the Assembly, "We must have a clear land reform program. Otherwise the Communists will win." Dr. Dan said that before the war the rice sharecroppers were "oppressed by the landowners" and fear their return. One of his few supporters explained, "Land reform is most needed in the Mekong Delta, but most of the delegates from that region are large landowners. About ten of them own over 1,000 hectares [2500 acres] each."

The proposal was to give every peasant the constitutional right to the land he is now tilling. "Although 'land to the tiller' is the Viet Cong chief rallying cry among the 80 percent landless peasantry of the Mekong Delta," Richard Critchfield reported in the Washington Star Dec. 1, the only other paper we saw which paid any attention to the story, "the measure got only three votes." This will make the "pacification" of the Delta more difficult. A lot of American boys will die in an effort to restore these landlords. The U.S. Embassy is expert at alerting the press when it wants to, but made no effort to focus attention on this vote.

The same Critchfield dispatch said the Embassy had been "actively encouraging" the Assembly to draft a Constitution like South Korea's where the military rule behind a civilian facade. But the Assembly though reactionary has a civilian majority and voted to bar the military from active politics and to adopt an American-style Constitution. Three days after this vote, the military junta announced (UPI in Washington Post Dec. 4) that it was rejecting the Assembly's demand that the military give up its veto power over any proposed new Constitution. This is how we bring freedom to South Vietnam.

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A Half Century Ago the Country and the Court Were Much Less Jeffersonian

The Bond Decision Upholds Opposition to the War as Free Speech

The Julian Bond suit was the first free speech case to reach our highest court involving opposition to the Vietnamese war. It was also the first time that the Supreme Court passed on the right of state legislatures to determine the qualifications of their own members. The State of Georgia, in arguing the right of its legislature to exclude Bond because he supported SNCC in opposing the war, relied on the principles of Federalism and of the separation of powers between legislature and judiciary. Georgia argued that its legislature had a right to be the final judge of the qualifications of its members.

Madison's Wise Foresight

The Court, in rejecting these arguments, relied on the views of Madison in the framing of the Constitution. He successfully opposed a proposal to give Congress power to establish qualifications for its members. He cited British Parliamentary experience to show how easily this could be abused to bar new members whose views the majority disliked. The Court held that for Georgia's legislature to exclude Bond because of his views on the war would be a violation of the First Amendment and his freedom of speech.

This unanimous decision, by Chief Justice Warren, reflects a half century's progress in civil liberties. In World War I, the only Socialist in Congress, Victor Berger of Milwaukee, was expelled for opposing the war. In the period of anti-Red hysteria which followed, five Socialists were expelled from the New York State legislature. Charles Evans Hughes, soon to become a Republican Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, defended their rights in vain. Earl Warren, another Republican Chief Justice, has in a similar situation forced the Georgia legislature to seat Julian Bond.

There are few countries where free traditions are deep enough to allow in war-time the kind of criticism SNCC voiced and Bond endorsed. SNCC said the U.S. had been deceptive in its "concern for freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and in the U.S. itself." It also said, "We recoil with horror at the inconsistency of a supposedly 'free' society where responsibility for freedom is equated with the responsibility to lend oneself to military aggression." This was no mild murmur of disagreement.

The Georgia House voted 184 to 12 that any man holding such views could not honestly take the oath to uphold the Constitution. The Supreme Court ruled that the power to exact the oath could not be used "to restrict the right of legislators to dissent from national or state policy under the guise of judging their loyalty to the Constitution." In a world where most of the newly "liberated" countries of Asia and Africa allow no dissent whatever, and the European Soviet states are barely beginning to allow a little feeble disagreement, this is a decision to make Americans proud. Jefferson isn't dead yet, despite our dirty little war and our huge military bureaucracy. We can still spit in their eye.

What "Food for Freedom" Means

Wider attention should be called to President Johnson's plan to change the name Food for Peace to Food for Freedom. To link food to "freedom" as Johnson interprets it is to use hunger as a level in favor of "free enterprise." Behind his strange and cruel reluctance to commit himself on the additional grain India desperately needs for a famine already begun is Johnson's insistence that India deal with U.S. oil companies for new fertilizer plants instead of building them under public ownership. The reality is that India has too much of this "freedom" already; we cannot remember an Indian famine which was not aggravated by the freedom its speculators and money-lenders enjoy. Johnson had better begin to worry more about the contrast with China. Isolated and without foreign aid, U.S. or Soviet (India has both), China has met its food needs in the same drought years without famine. That is really "self-help" but not the kind the White House likes. That contrast may make a new generation in India feel that "freedom" is only freedom to starve. That's not the whole story, but distended bellies are indifferent to debate.

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